



6712-01

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

47 CFR Part 54

[WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 14-58, 07-135, CC Docket No. 01-92; FCC 18-29]

Connect America Fund, ETC Annual Reports and Certifications, Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, Developing a Unified Inter-carrier Compensation Regime

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Final rule; announcement of effective date.

SUMMARY: In this document, the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) announces that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved, for a period of three years, an information collection associated with the rules for the Connect America Fund contained in the Commission's Rate-of-Return Order, FCC 18-29. This document is consistent with the Rate-of-Return Order, which stated that the Commission would publish a document in the Federal Register announcing the effective date of the new information collection requirements.

DATES: The amendment to § 54.313(f)(4) published at 83 FR 18951, May 1, 2018, is effective **[INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Alexander Minard, Wireline Competition Bureau at (202) 418-7400 or TTY (202) 418-0484. For additional information concerning the Paperwork Reduction Act information collection requirements contact Nicole Ongele at (202) 418-2991 or via email: Nicole.Ongele@fcc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Commission submitted revised information collection requirements for review and approval by OMB, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, on May 1, 2019, which were approved by OMB on June 10, 2019. The information collection requirements are contained in the Commission's Rate-of-Return

Order, FCC 18-29 published at 83 FR 18951, May 1, 2018. The OMB Control Number is 3060-0986. The Commission publishes this document as an announcement of the effective date of the rules published May 1, 2018. If you have any comments on the burden estimates listed below, or how the Commission can improve the collections and reduce any burdens caused thereby, please contact Nicole Ongele, Federal Communications Commission, Room 1-A620, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20554. Please include the OMB Control Number, 3060-0986, in your correspondence. The Commission will also accept your comments via e-mail at PRA@fcc.gov. To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (TTY).

SYNOPSIS

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3507), the Commission is notifying the public that it received OMB approval on June 10, 2019, for the information collection requirements contained in 47 CFR 54.313(f)(4) published at 83 FR 18951, May 1, 2018. Under 5 CFR 1320, an agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a current, valid OMB Control Number.

No person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act that does not display a current, valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number is 3060-0986.

The foregoing notice is required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Pub. L. 104-13, October 1, 1995, and 44 U.S.C. 3507.

The total annual reporting burdens and costs for the respondents are as follows:

OMB Control Number: 3060-0986.

OMB Approval Date: June 10, 2019.

OMB Expiration Date: June 30, 2022.

Title: High-Cost Universal Service Support.

Form Number: FCC Form 481 and FCC Form 525.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit, Not-for-profit institutions and State, Local or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents and Responses: 1,877 respondents; 11,977 responses.

Estimated Time per Response: 0.1 - 15 hours.

Frequency of Response: On occasion, quarterly and annual reporting requirements, recordkeeping requirement and third party disclosure requirement.

Obligation to Respond: Required to obtain or retain benefits. Statutory authority for this information collection is contained in 47 U.S.C. 151-154, 155, 201-206, 214, 218-220, 251, 252, 254, 256, 303(r), 332, 403, 405, 410, and 1302.

Total Annual Burden: 51,080 hours.

Total Annual Cost: No Cost.

Privacy Act Impact Assessment: No impact(s).

Nature and Extent of Confidentiality: The Commission notes that the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) must preserve the confidentiality of all data obtained from respondents and contributors to the universal service support program mechanism; must not use the data except for purposes of administering the universal service program; must not use the data except for purposes of administering the universal support program; and must not disclose data in company-specific form unless directed to do so by the Commission. Parties may submit confidential information in relation pursuant to a protective order. Also, respondents may request materials or information submitted to the Commission or to the Administrator believed confidential to be withheld from public inspection under 47 CFR 0.459 of the FCC's rules.

Needs and Uses: On November 18, 2011, the Commission adopted an order reforming its high-cost universal service support mechanisms. *Connect America Fund; A National Broadband Plan for Our Future; Establish Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers; High-Cost Universal Service Support; Developing a Unified Inter-carrier Compensation Regime; Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service; Lifeline and Link-Up; Universal Service Reform – Mobility Fund*, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 07-135, 05-337, 03-109; GN Docket No. 09-51; CC Docket Nos. 01-92, 96-45; WT Docket No. 10-208, Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 26 FCC Rcd 17663 (2011) (*USF/ICC Transformation Order*), and the Commission and Wireline Competition Bureau have since adopted a number of orders that implement the *USF/ICC Transformation Order*; see also *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Third Order on Reconsideration, 27 FCC Rcd 5622 (2012); *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Order, 27 FCC Rcd 605 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2012); *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Fifth Order on Reconsideration, 27 FCC Rcd 14549 (2012); *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Order, 28 FCC Rcd 2051 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Order, 28 FCC Rcd 7227 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Report and Order, 28 FCC Rcd 7766 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Report and Order, 28 FCC Rcd 7211 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Report and Order, 28 FCC Rcd 10488 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013); *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Report and Order, Order and Order on Reconsideration and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 31

FCC Rcd 3087 (2016); *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 16-271; WT Docket No. 10-208, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 31 FCC Rcd 10139 (2016); *Connect America Fund*; *ETC Annual Reports and Certifications*, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 14-58, Report and Order, 32 FCC Rcd 5944 (2017). The Commission has received OMB approval for most of the information collections required by these orders. At a later date, the Commission plans to submit additional revisions for OMB review to address other reforms adopted in the orders (e.g., 47 CFR 54.313(a)(6)).

More recently, in the *2018 Rate-of-Return Order*, the Commission adopted a rule requiring rate-of-return ETCs receiving high-cost universal service support to identify on their annual FCC Form 481 their cost consultants and cost consulting firm, or other third-party, if any, used to prepare financial and operations data disclosures used to calculate high-cost support for their submissions to the National Exchange Carrier Association, USAC, or the Commission. *Connect America Fund et al.*, WC Docket No. 10-90 et al., Report and Order, Third Order on Reconsideration, and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 18-29, at 19-20, para. 42 (Mar. 23, 2018) (*2018 Rate-of-Return Order*). See also 47 CFR 54.313(f)(4).

The Commission therefore revises this information collection, as well as Form 481 and its accompanying instructions, to reflect this new requirement. Any increased burdens for particular reporting requirements are associated with ETCs newly subject to those requirements as a condition of receiving high-cost support.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION.

Katura Jackson,

Federal Register Liaison Officer,

Office of the Secretary.

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